

# The English Magazine

Auspiciis melioris ævi

Volume 6, Issue the Fourth

## Speaking of the Unspeakable

A CATCH-PHRASE often used by the B.B.C. is (or was—does the B.B.C. still exist?):—"we have received criticism from both sides, so we think we must have the balance about right."

In order to understand the force of this, we must remember that whenever this vast broadcasting monopolist, armed with most of the powers and none of the responsibilities of a Government department, launched some new phase of its concerted attack upon tradition and civilisation; some new re-writing of history (new in itself, but always, of course, from the same old point of view); some fresh assault upon human decency, designed to corrupt children and pervert adults; whenever it did such a thing, which was (and presumably is, if it still exists) approximately three times a week, it could expect a flood of protest from that part of its audience which had not yet been brainwashed and browbeaten into a stupor of passive acceptance.

The import of the above-quoted phrase was that if the Corporation could dredge up a handful of vociferous nihilists prepared to shriek that it was still not going far enough; that it had left some shred of decency or tradition standing and that it should not have done so (and it was never difficult to find a fringe of such people—particularly among a generation weaned on B.B.C. propaganda), then the two protests could be taken to cancel one another out. No notice need be taken of those who objected to the B.B.C.'s campaign against humanity. The B.B.C. could continue to pose as the spotlessly impartial representative of Truth, ignoring the "extremists on both sides".

I mention this merely in order to assure our readers that *The English Magazine* has no intention of treating them in this crudely insulting fashion. We take all your comments seriously and have no intention of "canceling them out" with the comments of other readers.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to remark that while our last leader took note of those who criticise *The English Magazine* for her ostrich-like refusal to become involved in

campaigns upon immediate issues and her general disdain for "current events", we have received a certain amount of criticism from readers who take a directly opposite attitude.

These readers take the view that Perfect Publications should provide a haven from the hideousness of the late 20th century and should ignore the whole nasty business as far as is humanly possible. The most particular targets for such criticism are, unsurprisingly, the columns which the present writer contributes to *The Romantic* and *The English Magazine* and it is for this reason that the present writer has been invited to comment upon it.

To begin with, my critics may or may not be surprised to learn that I have a great deal of sympathy with them. No one, I was about to say, could have a greater distaste for the modern world than I. That would be a rash statement. No doubt some one could and perhaps some one does. If so, it would be a great pleasure to me to meet him; but certainly my distaste for the modern world is considerable. I do not (as you know) read newspapers beyond the cuttings you so kindly send me, and even they sometimes make me feel rather ill. More than once I have considered that I will one day have to give up the columns because I do not want forever to give even that small amount of attention to the modern world. It is a mood that comes upon me, and I do not know whether I shall actually give them up or not. In any case, I certainly consider the criticism of the modern world at best as being, like a just war, a necessary evil.

The idea of our publications as a haven is not a new one. *The Romantic* was conceived in that spirit, and I hope to a large extent, that is what they are. When *The Romantic* was founded, it was intended to produce it in such a way that it was not immediately obvious in what decade—or even in what century—it had been made. It was only after considerable debate and with some reservations that the Sparrowhawk column and other pieces of critical commentary were included.

There are two arguments for the inclusion of material which acknowledges the existence

of the late 20th century, only the first of which is really germane to the sort of material presented by the present writer: this is that since nearly every one has been, and many people continue to be, bombarded with huge doses of modernist propaganda, it is important that there should be some practical examples of how the modernist viewpoint should be criticised and exposed. In the relatively short time I have been writing my columns, numerous people have said or written something along the lines of: "Your criticisms are so obvious. I realise now that that is what I have always thought, but I could never have put it into words, or even

have thought it clearly." This, in itself, is a vindication of the columns.

If I have a facility for making clear what is obvious and natural, but has been obscured by the mad inversions of the modernist mind-bender, then I owe that facility chiefly to countless hours of splendid conversation with rapier-minded Romantic traditionalists, and I consider that I have a duty to pass on something of what I have been so freely given. Criticism of the modern world may seem, compared with the sweet tones of pure Romantic discourse, a harsh and rasping sound—but the rasp is cutting through our mental chains.

SPARROWHAWK

### Culture Criticism

## Modern Style & the Modern Person

being the text of a talk  
given on the 11th of April at the  
National College of Art and Design in Dublin

by Miss Lucinda Trail

I AM going to speak this evening of something about which I know very little. Probably considerably less than you do. I am going to speak about the Modern Person and the Modern Style; and, having seceded from the modern world almost entirely since my late 'teens, and having been wholly unsympathetic to it from the age of eight or nine, what I know is really only what I have picked up more or less accidentally over the years by virtue of living, as it were, next door to it.

Under these circumstances, it may appear something of an impertinence to presume to tell you anything about these things. My reason for doing so is that, standing outside the Style of the modern world, it appears to me, in a way that it cannot quite appear to you, as a period Style. Many of my acquaintances, who are Romantics and do not consider themselves as belonging to the modern world, use the terms "20th century" or "late 20th century" as if they were speaking of a period which had already passed; and that is rather how I tend to see the present period myself. My excuse, therefore, in talking to you about the modern Style, is that I present it from a perspective which is perhaps unique

in your experience—that of an historian looking at the modern world from the standpoint of another era. Specifically—and to declare my interest, as they say in Parliament—from the perspective of an age just following it, in which the reaction against 20th-century modernism has set in at its freshest and most intense; rather as the anti-Victorian reaction set in at the beginning of the 20th century itself.

This paper is going to be rather wide-ranging in scope, because I am using "Style" in its widest sense and I do not believe that we can see Style in isolation from the way people live, think and act and the underlying assumptions beneath their lives, thoughts and actions. But let me begin with an example of what I mean when I say that I see the Style of the modern world as a period Style, and proceed from there to notice that what appears to modern people living in the modern world to be nothing more than natural and spontaneous behaviour, is, in fact, highly stylised and expresses very definitely and unmistakably the manner of its period.

Some people say that one has only to see a few seconds of a film made in the 1930s to get from it a strong impression of "period"—of a world that is, in its style and mannerisms, very different from one's own. I have the opposite experience. Some time ago, I visited the house of a friend who uses a television machine for watching old films. While watching the film, I was unconscious of any sense of "period", but when the film ended (we watched the credits because the music was so delightful), for a few seconds while my friend fumbled with the "off" switch, I saw a modern young announceress and was at once infused by a powerful sense of period. Here was someone from a world quite other than my own, with a manner and

style which, while not entirely unfamiliar, marked her out as belonging to a particular age—the 1980s.

The girl was, no doubt, a pleasant enough young thing, yet the "period flavour" which she exuded had a hard-edged, oversophisticated, un-innocent and somewhat taut, neurotic feel which belonged not to her in particular but to the age whose manner she expressed—in whose "accent", as it were, she spoke.

Some one told me of a conversation between two people who regularly make television programmes. One said that he was often surprised when he saw appearances of himself made some years ago. Society, he said, had changed and people's mannerisms and language had changed with it. He felt that he had a very different *persona* in those days, though he had never been consciously aware of making the change.

A director making a film about Mussolini decided to film the crowd scenes not in Italy but in Roumania; the reason for this was that Roumania, while in many respects similar to Italy, had been protected by the insularity and inefficiency of the Bolshevik régime from many of the changes of the modern world. "People there," he said, "still walk and move in the way that people in the West did 30 years ago." And the way people moved and walked 30 years ago was not dissimilar to the way they moved and walked in the '20s and '30s when the film was set, nor, indeed, to the way they moved and walked before the first great war.

I mention these things to illustrate something of which I imagine most of you are already aware: the fact that people have changed very considerably over the past few decades—that there is such a thing as "the modern person", and that he speaks, thinks, moves, stands and acts differently from his counterpart before the last great war, or even before the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s. That this change has been a very radical one is indicated by the fact that, despite the very great cultural differences between Roumania and England, a Roumanian and an Englishman unaffected by this change walk and move in ways more similar to one another than the same Englishman before and after the change. To look at it from another prospect, we may say that the change has distorted something very fundamental in the carriage and manner of people—something that was not merely a superficial product of one culture, but was common to the whole of Europe, both eastern and western, despite the very different

histories of the peoples involved.

It is worthy of note that this change struck far deeper into the hearts and souls of its victims than did the sweeping upheavals and monstrous cruelties of Bolshevik revolution. Roumania underwent one of the most vicious programmes of Bolshevik restructuring, indoctrination and intimidation suffered by any European nation, with its attendant terror, torture and "liquidations", yet the people have emerged moving and walking in much the same way that they had before and in much the same way that their counterparts across Europe moved and walked. Yet in two decades, these very deep significations of the way in which people are conscious of themselves and of the world—far deeper than mere opinions and ideologies—have, in western Europe, been completely changed.

This rather extraordinary fact should be carefully considered by all those who imagine that they can expose themselves to television or to other agencies of modern enculturation without being inwardly affected by them. The changes wrought by these things are subliminal rather than conscious, and strike very deep indeed.

I wish in this paper to address two questions: what is the nature of the changes that have created the phenomenon of the Modern Person and how have they been brought about? Necessarily, our consideration of these two questions must be somewhat foreshortened as they might easily be the subject of an entire book, and probably should be so.

The simplest and most obvious change that has come about is a loss of innocence. This is immediately apparent in the face and manner of the modern person. The improper indulgence of carnal desires changes the face and gives a different cast to the whole bearing. Oscar Wilde—who was himself an excellent example of it—gives a profound and sensitive portrayal of this phenomenon in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Of course, there have been *roués* in all ages. The difference is that in the modern world, with the constant bombardment of ugly carnal immorality to which modern people are subjected from an early age, virtually every one takes on a considerable part of the mental corruption which once belonged only to the full-blooded boulder; and this corruption differs from the corruption of the *roué* of an earlier age, because it is not the result of a conscious decision to defy the rules of morality and society, it is a dull, habitual, unconscious corruption. In the eighteenth century, Oliver Goldsmith wrote:

*When lovely woman stoops to folly  
And finds too late that men betray,—  
What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
What art can wash her guilt away.*

In the present century, T.S. Eliot parodied these lines thus:

*When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again alone,  
She smooths her hair with automatic hand  
And puts a record on the gramophone.*

This is an incisive depiction of the bland, unconscious corruption of the modern world.—The corruption of people who really do not know any better—who have been reduced morally to the level of animals. And yet, people do, in fact, know better. There is a deep instinct in the human soul which will not allow us to feel right while we are doing wrong—it is an instinct which modern people have been taught to ignore or to regard as an irrational superstition, and yet it will not go away. Modern people are bombarded with all the arguments for moral anarchy and kept in ignorance of the arguments against it:—yet nothing will silence the "still, small voice" within them. It is this tension between the inborn moral sanity which we all possess and the moral chaos by which most 20th-century people are wholly or partly affected, and against which they do not know how to argue, which is responsible for much of the neurotic stress which is so characteristic of the modern person.

Another characteristic of the modern person is a lack of dignity. There is a dignity natural to every human being of whatever age or class, but the modern world has conspired in a thousand different ways to undermine this. The cult of casualness has pervaded every area of modern life and modern people are embarrassed to act with dignity, to speak eloquently (though they are happy to use every kind of absurd jargon with a perfectly straight face) or to comport themselves with the kind of self-respect which other ages have possessed—that quiet self-respect which comes from the consciousness of having a known and valued place in the scheme of things. It is almost as if modern people must act like clowns as a form of self-protection—because any hint of dignity or self-respect will immediately bring down upon them the ridicule of their fellow-inmates.

This destruction of human dignity is most apparent in the dress, stance and movement of modern people. At the height of the modern-

ist ascendancy it was considered embarrassing to go to a party looking as if one had made any effort at all to dress for it. The stance and movement of most modern people is an almost conscious attempt to look as loose and sloppy as possible. Of course, the more extreme cases do it in more extreme forms. We recently had some workmen doing certain repairs on our premises. One of them was a long-haired fellow of the type that used to be called a "hippie". One day I saw him out of an upstairs window and thought that he was pushing a wheelbarrow in a place where a wheelbarrow should not be. On closer inspection, however, he was not pushing a wheelbarrow at all. It was just that his normal walking stance was exactly the same as if he had been—legs spread, torso stooping forward at a marked angle and arms dangling in front of him. He could have run a deportment class for gorillas. Now this chap was an extreme example and no doubt his posture was deliberately affected, but if you look about you next time you are shopping, I think you will agree that he represented the ideal toward which the average person is slowly progressing.

Among women the loss of femininity is one of the most noticeable effects of modernism. Modern women are terribly confused, pulled one way by their natural instincts and another by a strange, strident, neutered ideal set up before them by the mass-media. This too is very evident in the stance and movement of the modern woman, as well as her voice and vocabulary. Having been shown some "clips" of the crowd scenes from the above-mentioned film about Mussolini, a particular instance comes to mind. Two young women (supposed to be Italians of the 1920s but in fact modern Roumanians) were running to catch a train. They used small, quick steps, their arms bent sharply at the elbows, hands open at shoulder level, slightly out from the body. It was a natural style of running adopted by two young women to whom it did not occur to sacrifice a deeply-rooted physical sense of poise and femininity to greater efficiency in catching a train. If you can picture this from my description, try comparing it to the style of running which would be adopted by a modern English girl under similar circumstances. The upheld hands signify restraint. The body is maintained upright despite the haste. The hands also convey a gesture of feminine vulnerability, offsetting the somewhat unfeminine nature of the violent physical exertion. The English girl, in her jeans, would pitch her

body forward, her limbs would sprawl at any angle. The lines of her body would probably suggest desperation to reach the train at all costs. The language of unconscious gesture would be masculine because her models for this kind of activity are provided by men. The Roumanian girls also lack a feminine model for running in a public place, which accounts for the slight awkwardness and self-consciousness of their stance, but—and this is the salient point—they had rather be awkward than unfeminine, and if retaining femininity involves not running with maximum efficiency, then they had rather, if necessary, miss the train than be unfeminine. This is not a conscious decision. It simply does not occur to them to be unfeminine in order to catch a train, any more than it occurs to an English commuter to take off all his clothes rather than suffer from heat (this last example is, indeed, one of the few remaining areas where custom and decency take automatic and unconscious precedence over convenience in the mind of the modern person).

Loss of trust is another important element in the new mentality. The modern person is—with reason—more suspicious of strangers. The ethics and codes of honour which governed the professions and most other areas of civilised life are often quite gone and can in no case be implicitly relied upon as they could in the past. Family and marital obligations may be freely abrogated. Politeness in public places is now the exception rather than the rule. Crime has reached unheard-of proportions. Children and the lower classes lack respect toward their betters (and, to be fair, those betters often no longer deserve respect). The result of all this is again a lowering of the standard of human life toward that of the animal. An animal in the wild must be wary at all times. He is not protected by the rules and codes of ordered civilisation, nor by the customs and conventions of polite conduct. Increasingly, modern man is being reduced to the same condition. One by one, all the rules, conventions and norms which have made life pleasant and liveable are questioned and destroyed. What was seen as destructive anarchy yesterday is represented as intelligent liberalism today and is common practice tomorrow. The result is that the modern person does not live in a secure, knowable world in which things and people are to be trusted, but a chaotic, unpredictable one in which one is ultimately alone. The extraordinary epidemic of divorce (I cannot remember the figures, but a very

high proportion of all marriages now end in divorce) has ensured that not even the home can any longer be regarded as a sure and permanent haven for husband, wife or children.

All of this has taken its toll on the modern person. One can see merely by comparing a modern photograph with an older one, that the modern face is more closed, harder, more suspicious, more self-contained and self-absorbed, more alert, not in the sense of having a keener intellect, but in the way that any animal fending for itself in a hostile world is alert.

The modern person is also more sophisticated, if by "sophisticated" we mean more cynical, less capable of innocent enjoyment, more blasé and discontented. If by "sophisticated" we mean more intelligent, one has only to look at the increasing simplification of the language of the newspapers (both the yellow press and the better-class papers) to see that this is not so. In the '30s, while cinema entertainment was in many ways more childish, because more innocent, even very popular films often contained operatic or balletic sequences which the equivalent modern audience would not endure. The "sophistication" of the modern audience is no more than a demand for greater slickness in the presentation of entertainment which is, in substance, less demanding than ever.

The modern person is a person who has been cut off from his roots, who does not know clearly what is right and what wrong; whom to trust and certainly whom to regard as a reliable authority. His family life, if not actually disrupted, no longer has the sanctity and security that it should have. He probably does not live in the community in which he grew up. There is no sense of continuity with the past. Even "small" changes like the replacement of traditional county names, the adoption of decimal coinage and of alien units of weight and measure have the effect of destroying continuity and placing him in a cultural vacuum where only the barren products of the brave new world continue to exist. Values like honour, loyalty, patriotism and decency, of course, are laughed to scorn. When he listens to the screamings of modern popular music, the anarchic crudity of modern comedy, the moral turpitude of modern drama on stage, film or television, or the pure, self-indulgent chaos of modern art or poetry, he realises that even the distinction between sanity and madness is no longer clear.

*"In an ugly world, the richest man can buy nothing but ugliness."* GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

The moralist may say that the modern world is geared to self-gratification, but even that is not really true. The modern world is a dull, sober-sides sort of place, despite its anarchic tendencies. Whimsy, elegance, charm and grace and even simple fun are all hated and stamped out wherever possible. Guilt of every sort (except, of course, a genuine sense of sin) is mongered by the "mass-media". Simple pleasures like drinking and smoking are attacked by sanctimonious semi-official preachers. Even the "rebels" and "eccentrics" are grindingly predictable with their mass-issue neurotic fads. For many it is not so much the immorality of modern life as its dullness and ugliness and strange, inverted Puritanism which is most repulsive. Only gratification of the lowest and vilest kind is really catered to, and in exchange for that, everything of real value, everything that sustains and nourishes the human heart, has been sold for the proverbial mess of pottage.

To sum up, we may say that the phenomenon of the Modern Person is created by a single cause: *rootlessness*. He has had almost every element of continuity with the past, every moral and philosophical certainty, every sense of place within a traditional order of society shorn from him. The secondary results of this rootlessness are: *distrust*, which causes a hard outer shell to form over his personality; the acceptance of *immorality* in theory and probably in practice, which saps his sense of self-worth because it goes against his deepest instincts of right and wrong, despite the superficial rationalistic arguments which seem to have invalidated these instincts; *casualness* which forms part of the hard outer shell, is encouraged by the dissolution of form and custom and contributes to the destruction of the sense of self-worth.

The modern style may, in some respects, seem contradictory. In some respects it is lax and casual; in others it is hard and aggressive—and these two elements are not separate or seen as contradictory—indeed, both find their highest expression in the lounging thug who decorates the street corners of Britain and America. Again, the modern world is at once sybaritic and Puritanical, labour-saving and work-obsessed.

The modern motor-car, which may well come to be seen as the cardinal stylistic symbol of the late 20th century, expresses such contradictions in itself. Its seats are constructed in such a way that one must crouch down to get into them and once in them, it is impossible to sit upright. One is compelled to

lounge, if not to sprawl. This expresses the exaggerated casualness of the 20th century style. At the same time, the lines of the vehicle are made to express speed and power at the expense of any element of traditional design. There are no proper lamps, running-boards, proper mudguards or anything of that sort. All is stark functionalism. This again is decorated with the most garish and unpleasant colours which make every modern street such an eye-sore. How wise Henry Ford was when he said that a car might be any colour one wished so long as it was black.

These different elements might seem to express a set of contradictions, but in fact they do not. They express different facets of human nature, but each filtered through the mesh of the modern style, whose fundamental principle is that of rootlessness and of discontinuity with tradition. Certainly one may have luxury, but it must be *anti-traditional* luxury. All the things which link a car with its ancestors, the coach, the carriage and the chariot, must be stripped away and streamlined. Luxury is of the democratic, lounging sort, and as such it is welcomed as an intensification of casualness and as an expression of the principle of *comfort*, to which, together with *convenience*, every element of formal and traditional style must be sacrificed.

Of course, it is not really a question of sacrificing style to comfort and convenience. The sacrifice in itself is part of a style; a style which, to the eyes of the next century, will look just as period and as *passé* as that of any other era;—and, to some of us, already does.

#### Helpful Hints

### Jug & Bottle

A STANDARD English bottle has always been one sixth of an Imperial gallon, or 1½ pints. A pseudo-froggified bottle marked "75 cl." or "75 l." is almost exactly the same. The difference is about one teaspoon (short, of course).

Bottles marked "70 cl." are a "metric cheat" and should be avoided.

A magnum is a double bottle, so bottles marked "1.5 l." are almost exactly a magnum. You should always refer to these sizes as "bottle" and "magnum" respectively.

Bottles marked "1.13 l." (e.g. Bell's and Grouse) are an exact Imperial quart.

We are indebted for this information to Mr. Donald Hammond, secretary of the Dozenal Society, Millside, Mill Rd., Denmead, Hampshire.

#### Correspondence

### Miss-Addressed Maidens

MADAM, I was a bit surprised by Mr. Anthony Cooney's statement in your last issue: "part of the silliness of 'Ms.' is that it requires the *faux pas* of appropriating it". I only wish it jolly well did. Mr. Cooney, being a chap, has no idea what we girls suffer with all sorts of idiots calling us "Muzz", from magazine editors (present company firmly excepted) to the gasworks—even when we have clearly stated our preferred form of address.

I normally write two polite letters and if both are ignored, begin returning letters (unopened if possible) with a covering note saying that correspondence will not be dealt with unless properly addressed. That usually does the trick. I have a friend who burns all ms-addressed correspondence without attempting to find out what was in it. She says she has not noticed any diminution in the quality of her post as a result, though she does receive the occasional frenzied telliecall from some one wanting money.

Once she has politely explained the cause of the problem, it does not recur.

Yr. OBT. SERVt. MISS P. M. LANGRIDGE

MADAM, Mr. Cooney's implication that women themselves are responsible for the revolting "Ms." is akin to the notion that "the People" caused the French or Russian Revolutions. It is both naïve and (I am sure unintentionally) insulting. All revolutions, whether in politics or in style, are caused by nasty little cliques of unrepresentative rotters, and "Ms." is no exception.

YOURS &c. MISS M. MARTINDALE

MADAM, Mr. Anthony Cooney writes that the traditional use of the titles *Mrs.* and *Miss* to denote marital status "does create a problem, and it would be idle to pretend that it does not." This "problem" only occurs when writing to unknown female correspondents who have not indicated their proper title—not a particularly common occurrence for most of us. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to stress that such a "problem" simply does not exist. There is a correct and well established procedure which has been in use for at least a century. When writing to an unknown female correspondent who has not indicated her proper title, one addresses her as "Miss —". Any "problem" is simply the

result of ignorance of this rule.

I realise that you appended a brief note to this effect to Mr. Cooney's essay, but I am taking this opportunity to restate the matter more forcefully because the essay is in danger of perpetuating a myth which has done much to break down proper usage over the last decade or so. With the promoters of what Mr. Cooney rightly terms "a particularly fatuous ideology" on the one hand, and those who see proper usage as a "problem" on the other, our traditional forms of address have been caught in a pincer movement.—It is exactly like the erosion of proper counties, where those who do not actually *want* to use modern pseudo-county names feel themselves forced to do so by the imaginary "problem" of postal delays caused by using non-recommended addresses (they do not actually occur).

The suggestion of a reversion to the use of the full form "mistress" is not without its charm, but now—when our traditional usages are under assault and any confusion can only assist the enemies of tradition—is not the time to suggest "reforms" of any sort.

*Mrs.* and *Miss* are part of our heritage. They have been used for centuries without causing the least "problem". There is no occasion to change our customary forms of address. If the ignorance and confusion of the present time demand any response from us, it is that we should stand by tradition more firmly and unswervingly than ever, in all things, both great and small.

YOURS &c. MISS C. JEFFRIES.

#### IN PARENTHESIS

MADAM, On the final line of the ninth page of the second edition of Volume "S" of *The English Magazine*, a parenthesis is opened. I have scanned the rest of the sentence, the rest of the paragraph, the rest of the essay, and indeed the rest of the issue, but nowhere does that parenthesis close. The next issue arrived, and I thought that surely it must close there. But no. More than one and a half issues have been included within this parenthesis and still there is no sign of its closing. Please close it at the beginning of your next issue, or the suspense will become unbearable for,

YOUR OBT. SERVt. MISS P.-P. TURNER.

Now really. A closing parenthesis at the beginning of the magazine would look rather silly, would it not? (But to put you out of your suspense, I will close it now). There. We are outside it at last.

## Words

## The Infamous Sixth Edition

by Miss Caroline Scott-Robinson

I DO not know a great deal about the science of Astrology, but I would guess, on empirical grounds, that my Stars are rather bound up with those of Sparrowhawk just at the moment. Last issue but one, Sparrowhawk provided the pasturage, as it were, for my ruminations upon Latinate and Germanic intrusions into our language, and now Miss Prism has passed to me the following communication with the request that I should comment upon the question contained therein. It is from our interesting new friend, Miss Odette Cooper:

I very much enjoyed Sparrowhawk's amusing dissection of a "quality" Sunday newspaper in your last number. One thing which puzzles me is the scorn poured on the word "quality" itself, in its adjectival use. I looked it up in my *Concise Oxford*, and there it is as the sixth definition of the word: (as an adjective) "possessing high degree of excellence; concerned with the maintenance of high quality". Whether this definition applies to any modern British newspaper is certainly open to question, but surely this shows that the adjectival sense of the word "quality" is perfectly legitimate. Actually, now I come to think of it, it does sound rather American and I am not sure I like the sound of it, so really I am only asking because I want to know.

There would appear to be an anomaly here. My *Concise Oxford* has no sixth definition of "quality": it has only five and it allows no adjectival usage of the word. We need not, however, feel any supernatural shudder, or begin talking, like Miss Lindy Lynne, of the Fourth Dimension. There is a natural explanation. I am using the Fifth Edition of the *Concise Oxford*, while Miss Cooper is clearly using a later edition.

It would be nice to think that lexicographers, or at any rate, Oxford lexicographers, were, automatically, and in virtue of their office, lexicographically sound: just as it would be nice to think that bishops were theologically sound. Both, until fairly recently, were so, on the whole, but now, it is my painful duty to inform you, modernist lexicographers are no more to be trusted than modernist bishops.

The Sixth Edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* represents the Vatican II of the British lexicographical world. It contains

countless heresies and heterodoxies, from "lifestyle" to the dreadful Sixth Definition of "quality".

Against the defence that such a dictionary is merely reflecting English as she is spoken, we would say that the Sixth Edition is not following the practice of earlier editions, which was to defer the inclusion of neologisms for some decades until it was clear that they had a permanent place in the language. The new policy is motivated not by sound lexicography, but by the modish worship of the new for its own sake, however trivial, insignificant and worthless it may be; as well as by the "democratic" prejudice that will not recognise certain usages as sub-standard. For example, the Sixth Edition includes the expression "hep cat", meaning "a hep person, jazz or swing addict, hipster". The expression is quite obsolete today, and must have been well on the way out even when the decision was made to include it in 1976. It would actually have been nearer to current "English" in 1964, when the Fifth Edition was published, but at that time the compilers had more sense than to include it. A dictionary is supposed to represent the real language, not the fleeting effluvia of its transient sub-standard usages. To include every piece of slang, cant and jargon which ever enjoyed a few years' or a few decades' currency in the whole history of the language would require a massive dictionary, mostly filled with obscurities and absurdities. To have a dictionary always "up to date" with every passing fad which will be forgotten tomorrow would require a loose-leaf dictionary, or else the purchase of a new one every five years or so. Perhaps that is the point!

However that may be, I shall assume my readers to have no vested interest in increasing the sales of dictionaries, nor any liking for the modern perversions of our language, and shall therefore advise him to buy no Oxford dictionary published after the mid-'60s. If one requires an up-to-date, sound, compact late 20th-century dictionary, one can hardly do better than the Fifth Edition of the *Concise Oxford*. If necessary buy a newer edition and swap it with some native acquaintance who has the earlier one. He will be pleased to have a newer edition, so if your conscience can rest easily with the knowledge of having introduced an abomination into some one's life, all will be well.

Should you happen to have two editions, one pre-Sixth and one post-Fifth, much can be learned from a comparison of the definit-

ions (or absence of them) of various key modernist phrases in each. It would probably make an excellent subject for an essay in *The English Magazine*.

To return to the Sparrowhawk piece which gave rise to this discussion, connoisseurs of neo-Bowlerism (the subject, if you recall, of that piece) will be fascinated to note that Nigger Minstrels have mysteriously disappeared from the Sixth Edition (very curious. I am sure that most young people still know what a nigger minstrel is, which is more than one can say for a "hep cat") and that almost every colloquial term for a non-white person has suddenly been marked "derog." (not even "usu. derog.", which is used elsewhere) This strikes me as not only quite inaccurate, but as hoisting (in the petard sense) the entire argument in justification of modernist lexicography, which is that it represents the language as it is actually used by people.

There may be people who use a word like "wog" as a term of pure derogation, just as there may be people who use "Scouser", "Geordie" or "tyke" (in the Yorkshire sense) as terms of pure derogation. However, we all know people—and Oxford lexicographers also know people—who use such words in a perfectly jovial and inoffensive way. The "derog." is not a descriptive but a prescriptive comment. We are being told that the Oxford authorities, in line with the latest liberal fashions, do not want us to say "wog" and that if we do we are being intentionally rude (which we probably are not).

When the modernist lexicographer is so ready to desert his cherished principle of "actual usage" in favour of every passing whim of modernist ideology, surely he has stripped his intellectual nakedness of even that piece of rather tawdry clothing.

## Correspondence

## Salutary Reason Needed

MADAM, I am enjoying the Shelmerdine Bingham story, but am disturbed that her pilfering has so far gone undetected and, worse, unpunished. Surely this is a poor example of morality for *The English Magazine* to set before its readers?

It seems to me that Shelmerdine's behaviour can end in only one way: namely a summons to the headmistress's study for an interview that is painful in more ways than one.

I know of a similar case where the 'treatment' administered by the Head effected an

instant and complete 'cure'. Of the exact nature of the 'medicine' I will say nothing except that the young lady concerned found it politic to occupy the next few hours in activities that did not involve sitting down!

YOURS &c., MR. DAVID NASH-BROWN  
*Miss Prism is entirely of your opinion. Miss Langridge says that she has certainly considered this possibility, though the moral of the story may be enacted on the psychological rather than the exterior level, particularly in view of Shelmerdine's charmed life. This sounds a little unsound to Miss Prism, who points out that if Shelmerdine has a charmed life, Miss Langridge may not.*

## The Time for Action

MADAM, I do hope the Comment in Vol. 5, No. 3 Editorial anent Readers who "w'd reproach" y<sup>o</sup> f<sup>r</sup> n<sup>t</sup> Campaigning actively f<sup>r</sup> use of County Names does not refer to me. I h<sup>v</sup> indeed commented that Perfect Publications always refers to Counties at the end of lists of traditionalist Subjects as if they are the least important, as, for example, in "At Last, an Alternative to the Maf's Media": something happily rectified in this Instance. But of course it is n<sup>t</sup> the Work of Perfect Pubs. to campaign in any other sense than to encourage Readers (& Listeners) as w<sup>t</sup> the current "Imperial" page-ends & "Helpful Hints".

Of Course, also, as y<sup>o</sup> write, f<sup>r</sup> effective Campaigning there must be Knowledge & Understanding, and the Example of our Lives, but this does n<sup>t</sup> mean Campaigning of the correct Sort is out of Place. Campaigning, indeed, is unlikely to change "official" minds directly and at present; but it will bring an Appreciation of the Existence of Continuing Traditional Values to a wider Circle, and is likely to be the only Source of Information for such People.

My Book, *The Strange Case of the Counties that Didn't Change* treats at Length of such Priorities in campaigning. Its Section on "The Future" points out that although the Present is always the worst Place from which to attempt to read the Future,—as the 19th-Century Utilitarians found, when complete Success was snatched from them, when, at that Century's "Eleventh Hour" there was a Refurgence of Traditionalism,—as far as can be seen at the Moment, & in spite of a marked Return to Appreciation of the Traditional in

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some Matters which require no Commitment, the Hope of a Return to Tradition will die w<sup>t</sup> the passing into a Minority of those who remember the old Ways in general Use, unless we share what we pos<sup>s</sup>ess w<sup>t</sup> others now.  
Yrs. &c. FR. FRANCIS of the MOTHERHOOD of OUR LADY.

#### Motoring

### Introducing Arabella Austin by Miss Clare Traill

THE other day found me driving along in a modern car of some description (I am as oblivious of its name as I wish I were of its memory) while my beloved Austin Devon, vintage 1949, was receiving some attention in a garage. Oh hideous fate! that led me thus to such a sense-befouling event. First, I beheld the sleek and shiny reptilian pale blue monster sprawling in a low undignified manner at the side of the road. Next, attempting to enter it, I found myself precipitated into a low, bucket-like seat from which one peered up at the windscreen, and clutched a black plastic circle no bigger than a small dinner plate. Having been thus forced into a curvilinear position, I contemplated the interior. A mass of dials and little screens and lights, all with ugly scrawls and hieroglyphic signs in black, blobby shapes assailed my eyes. All across the horizon the oblong faces of the myriad dials seemed to leer at me, crudely displaying their oversized, sans-serif numbers.

And then, worst of all:—raindrops, compelling me to clear the windscreen. There came before my vision two great black crows which reeled and swept across the vast and curving windscreen. A fitting symbol of the ugliness and nastiness which seared my brain and infected my soul.

Compare this with Arabella. Arabella Austin was born in 1949 and looks and is very sprightly on her forty years. In fact she is much younger than that reptilian vehicle lent to me by the garage. At ten years old, the various space-age fittings, which once gleamed with cheap-but-costly, plebeian flashiness now look tawdry and dilapidated beyond belief (which was no doubt a deliberate part of the design); while far more decades have given Arabella nothing more than a rather pleasant patina.

Arabella takes great delight in being admired as she frequently is, even occasionally allowing enthralled males of the lower classes to become further enraptured by a little turn in her driving seat holding the wheel.

She has of course many points of beauty—her black, upright body, with its nicely curved wings and beautifully rounded headlamps—but perhaps none are so thrilling as to sit behind her wheel. Her seats are almost completely upright and, covered in leather as they are, smell wonderful. The steering wheel is large and definite; when one grasps it one feels as though one is in control of something worth controlling, something large and powerful. And her dials! Why, what things of beauty. Small, compact, silver-mounted and with nice lettering, they sit discreetly before one's eyes, an adornment to her interesting interior. The windscreen is also small and discreet, so that one has the definite feeling of sitting in a motor-carriage rather than the illusion of being in front of a wide cinema screen. And the windscreen wipers; oh, what charming little fellows. How sweet, how small, how delicate. They clear a perfectly adequate amount of screen, of course. There really is no need for excess in everything.

I believe there is something quite extraordinarily different about Arabella's doors. I cannot call to mind the peculiar design of the reptile's doors (I believe they were some sort of spring-loaded space-capsule nonsense). Perhaps it will suffice for me to describe Arabella's darling doors. Arabella has four doors, each one swinging right out and opening as though one were entering a room. One steps up to enter (and down to alight) as though one were entering a real carriage. In the front, one has one of those delightful triangular windows which open and direct a fresh, cooling breeze wherever and at whatever force you require. In the back seats, you sit beyond the rear door, next to a rather larger triangular window, which does not open and through which you look at the passing countryside. You have to move forward to leave your seat and get out of Arabella. She would not have anything so vulgar as sitting in the doorway for her passengers.

And now to the driving. You really have to drive to drive Arabella. Only the technically-minded who are good at spinning the jolly old wheel will follow me here. I have already mentioned how the steering wheel is a respectable size. When you hold it, you have to turn it. You know, really turn it to get the jolly old wheels moving. None of this letting-

the-gadgets-do-it-all-on-your-behalf feeling that there is in a modern car. It is the same with the pedals. You have to press down the accelerator, press it down hard enough to be aware of what you are doing. And the gear stick. Well, that is rather magnificent. Changing gear is a dramatic and definite action, not a fiddly little movement where everything is so close together that the gears are impossible to distinguish from each other, and you end up in first gear when you wanted to be in fourth and *vice versa*.

Of course, I must not forget the opening roof. Her other devotees,—I mean, her usual passengers,—will never forgive me. One opens the roof, and in all weathers, even on quite cool days, one has a delightful airing. No breeze is created, just an airiness that blows lightly about the jolly old temples, keeping one fresh for the weary miles ahead. When the sun is out, it pours deliciously into the interior, avoiding the eyes and warming the body instead. Oh yes, Arabella would not be the same without her opening roof.

Just in case you think all this she-ing and her-ing is merely a literary device, Arabella herself wants me to tell you that she is real. She has her moods and her feelings just like anyone else; her moments when she races along feeling energetic and daring; her languorous moods when she says that ambling is the only respectable pace at which to drive though countryside and no matter what her driver does, she just does not seem to go faster. She always enjoys being admired (I am afraid that she is just a little bit vain) and knows in a superior sort of way, that though she was an ordinary enough car in her day, she is really a rather extraordinary car now and is, unless we pass her previous owner in one of his vintage William Wolseys, the only car worth noting on the road.

### Miss Prism's Quiz

- 1) How did the word "quiz" originate?
- 2) Which is the odd man out and why: Adios, Goodbye, Auf Wiedersehen, Adieu?
- 3) What is special about the sum of 6/8d and how does it demonstrate the inadequacy of the decimal system?
- 4) What, literally, is a *spendthrift*?
- 5) How many successful popular revolutions have there been in Europe since 1789?

Two optional additions to the quiz are: α) Invent an amusing line for an imposition: e.g. "I must not knock on doors and shoot peas at the people who open them." and β) Those

who feel they would benefit therefrom may write 100 times "I must always endeavour to be good and pure and true." Places will be given for: the best correct answers to the questions, the most amusing line and the neatest 100 lines. Send them, of course, to me. What are places? You will find out.

#### Miss Prism Advises

### Miss-'Dressed' Maidens

MADAM, I have recently been faced with a moral dilemma, which, as one concerned with the education of the young, you will, I am certain, be able to resolve.

But to-day, I was supplied with stereotyped copies of a letter for my young female charges to deliver to their parents. The letter made a reference to "school dresses".

Should I instruct my young ladies to cross neatly through the slangage and write above it "frocks" or would this be discourteous to the composer of the letter, who is known to the parents? Is courtesy ever subject to the principle of the greater good? Would the appending of the word "*sic*," after "dresses" rather than changing it suffice to establish its ineligibility in its context without pointing too strongly to its vulgarity?

I would be grateful for the thoughts of others on this dilemma.

YOURS &c. MR. ANTHONY COONEY.

You may be interested to know, apropos of Miss Scott-Robinson's piece in this issue, that the use of "dress" for a child's frock is accepted by the Sixth Edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary, while the Fifth Edition carefully defines a frock as "a woman's dress" or "a child's bodice and skirt".

Several different principles are involved in your dilemma. There is the principle of not diminishing the authority of one in authority in the eyes of those over whom he has authority; that of not teaching children wrongly; that of not lending the weight of an institution such as a school to a solecism and that of not giving offence.

Your choice of action lies between two courses: that of making the correction and that of doing nothing. The third course of inserting *sic* is not recommended, being, in my view, the worst of all worlds. The possible slight is not diminished while the necessary correction is not made.

One must assess the situation from one's knowledge of the individuals concerned, but I would suggest that, unless exceptional sensitivities are involved, the error should simply be corrected as would any misprint, on the stated (and charitable) assumption that it is simply that.

# SHELMERDINE

BY MISS PRISCILLA LANGRIDGE

## CHAPTER IV

### A GAME OF CHESS

THE redeeming feature of her regular sessions with Flavia was, in Shelmerdine's eyes, that they were mysterious. It would have been easy and pleasant to have become a fully-fledged member of the Inner Circle, sharing every spare moment with the twins and Allison. In the eyes of the form it would have been an enviable position; but it would, Shelmerdine felt, have made her rather too much a known quantity. As it was, she flitted in and out of the Circle like an elegant butterfly, now joining in the jolliest of japes like a true third-former, but often unaccountably absent upon some business of her own. Consequently, the rather enigmatic face which she had presented to the form upon their first encounter was not wholly supplanted by the more domesticated and approachable *persona* of "Jolly Old Shelmerdine".

Under normal circumstances the secret of Shelmerdine's most-nightly disappearances would soon have been discovered. It is not easy to keep that kind of secret in a school like Granchester. But Flavia was so intensely private. She had made neither friends nor any sort of a mark at Granchester. Her movements were unknown and unnoticed and always had been. The very fact that she imagined that the secret would be possible to keep showed how little she knew of the general life of the school which had for eighteen months been her home. Shelmerdine, of course, was much more in the public eye, but stealth was her *forté*. If she did not wish people to see something, then they did not see it.

Shelmerdine's private moments were not restricted to her study sessions. On the first Saturday after her arrival she got leave to go into the town on a private mission about which even Flavia knew nothing. It was her first debriefing with Miss Chess. The rendezvous was a tea shop in Granchester High Road called The Copper Kettle.

The School was not far from the outskirts of Granchester town. Even for the unathletic Shelmerdine the walk was not a daunting one. The School was built on a hill, and as one descended into the town, one had a splendid view over the patchwork country-

side which surrounded it. The first thing that struck Shelmerdine about the town itself was an extraordinary old-worldness which she had never encountered in her own day. It was not simply the near-absence of motor traffic, nor the fact that there were very few "modern" buildings. Somehow there was an air of small-country-townness—of rural completeness and self-identity—which was hard to define but definitely there. In her day such places had been to a large extent hangers-on of the life and thoughts of the big cities. Perhaps it was the absence of television and wireless which made the difference.—If they were absent. She really did not know.

As in the School, there was a feeling of continuity with the past. A sense that the long and winding road which ran through history and through the present had somehow made a bridge over the little aberration of her own age.

The road that led down down into the town seemed at first like a wide, hard dirt track, but after a way, Shelmerdine realised that it had once been a tarmac road. In many places it was covered by a layer of earth. In others, potholes had been filled with soil and gravel. Its crumbling edges had been encroached upon by weeds and nettles as had many cracks in its surface, but it still retained the hardness and smoothness of the old road. It reminded Shelmerdine (though it was not actually straight) of the Straightness of the Roman roads, so very different from the "rolling English road" which came before and after them.

As she came into the town itself, the hybrid dirt-and-tarmac gave way to cobbles. Not the round, bumpy kind, but smooth, flat, carefully fitted stones—quite new. The tea shop itself was a stone and timber building with a copper kettle hanging outside beneath a sign proclaiming its name.

"Miss Shelmerdine Bingham?" asked a very smart young waitress, perhaps two years younger than herself, as she entered.

"Pop on the potato."

"Miss Chess awaits you upstairs, miss," said the girl, and gave Shelmerdine such a sunny smile that she could not but return it.

As she mounted the heavy oaken stairway she noticed something rather curious about both it and the great stones of which the wall was constructed.

Miss Chess was seated at a window table, looking out over the street. No doubt she had watched Shelmerdine's approach. She was wearing a claret-coloured coat and skirt with the fashionable collar, much wider than Shel-

merdine's own. Her hair was up in a tight bun but with long curls of her dark-and-steel-grey hair looping at each side of her face. She looked very different from before. Older in a way; younger in another. Very much like an aunt who might be having tea with a Granchester girl at the Copper Kettle. Shelmerdine took a few moments to digest the transformation.

"Sit down, my dear, sit down." The older woman took a little gold fob-watch from an inner pocket. "Exactly on time. School has improved your punctuality at any rate." What on earth did she know about Shelmerdine's punctuality? A wild phantasy raced through her head that Miss Chess might refuse to acknowledge their previous arrangement; might treat her as the niece she was supposed to be; talk about her illness; fuss about her academic progress. She took the initiative.

"What a fascinating building. Stone and timber. You can see at this window-sill that the walls are nearly two feet thick. It could easily be mediæval. But it's new, isn't it?"

"Well, not that new," said Miss Chess. "It was built over ten years ago."

"Hard to believe," said Shelmerdine.

They were seated opposite one another. Miss Chess laid her hand upon a chair that stood between them at the side of the table.

"Look at this chair," she said. "It isn't Sheraton, but it is a splendid piece of craftsmanship. When you and I were your age you couldn't have found work like this outside an antique shop; and then the price would have been anatomical—"

"I know—an arm and a leg."

"How nice to talk to a girl who remembers the old jokes! But the point is that you should not let the surface of things fool you too completely. A lot of things are done by machine these days; and when they are they are done so completely by machine that human beings hardly come into it at all. We do not need factories any more. It leaves people free to do the things that people do best. The things that only people can do and that give people true satisfaction. Real craftsmanship. Real service. The things which make life decent and worthwhile. You remember people used to talk about a 'leisure state'? Well, we could have had it, I suppose; but nobody wanted it. What they wanted was fulfilling work which—"

"But look here, young Shelmerdine. You should have read about all this. What happened to that book I gave you?"

"Well, you know what school is. I've hardly had a moment to look at it since I got off the train."

"I suppose you were too busy to eat the chocolates too."

"Yes. Funnily enough I haven't eaten any of them since I got off the train either."

"I can imagine why. But down to business. Have you anything to report about Cara Leonie?"

"As a matter of fact I have. You see, I happened to steal her fountain pen and—"

"Shelmerdine! You simply must not do things like that at Granchester. You will spoil everything."

"I was only borrowing it really."

"And how many other things have you borrowed since you were there?"

"Well, there was the School fencing cup—and, of course, I had to borrow the keys in order to get it. And I borrowed Mademoiselle's spectacles the night after I scamped my French exercises. The poor old thing won't admit she is as blind as a bat without them. She just ended up saying that my work wasn't that bad after all. And then there was—"

"Very well, that will do for now."

"Anyway, it's just as well I *did* borrow Cara's pen." Bother! Just as she thought she had everything under control she found herself talking like a schoolgirl to an aunt. She made a determined change in her tone. "I discovered a secret chamber inside the pen containing a number of cut diamonds. I couldn't tell for certain, but there was certainly a lot of money there. I replaced them and restored the pen to her. She is none the wiser."

"Let us hope not; but thank you. The information is very intriguing. Keep watching Miss Leonie. Discreetly, though. She is very sharp indeed."

"Um—there is a touch of a problem there. You see, I'm not in her form any more. I hardly see her."

"Really? And in what form are you?"

Shelmerdine felt herself colour. "The Third."

Miss Chess smiled broadly but not unkindly. "Of course. Educational Standards have changed somewhat since our day, have they not?"

"I think I'm catching up quite quickly. The Head says I've the ability and I'm getting some coaching from a very bright little thing called Flavia Randall and—"

She paused, realising that she was sliding back into gymslip mode.

Miss Chess's voice became soothing,

SAY QUARTS, NOT L•T•R•S  
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though still in a brisk sort of way. "Don't fret, old chap. Just do your best. That's all anyone can ask of you. I am sure you'll soon get a remove, but even if you did not I should not mind so long as I felt confident that you were doing your level best."

Shelmerdine gasped inwardly. She had done it. She had done just what she had feared. She was talking simply as an aunt to a schoolgirl. Shelmerdine pulled things back.

"Look, you must have done a fair bit of wangling to get me into Granchester at all. Can't you use whatever influence you have to induce the Head to put me back into the Sixth?"

"I fear I have used *all* the influence I have just to get you in. I should not like to trespass any further upon Miss Tavistock's good nature."

"But look, what about watching Cara Leonie? That is what I'm there for, isn't it?"

"Oh, try not to worry so much, child. I trust your famous luck even if you do not. And try not to say 'look' like that. It does not sound well."

"But really, Miss Chess—"

"Fuss, fuss, fuss. You don't want to make yourself ill again, do you?"

There was a strange, half panic-stricken look in Shelmerdine's eyes. Miss Chess looked straight into it and smiled. "You do take yourself seriously, don't you?"

"Do I?" asked Shelmerdine, who had never thought that she did.

"You do in a way, but I am not sure that it is the right way."

"More tea?"

"Thank you."

"Do you feel up to coming for a nice long walk with me this afternoon?"

Shelmerdine wrinkled her nose in that engaging little-girl smile. "Now who's worrying? I am completely recovered, you know."

### Correspondence

## Astronomic Barbarities

MADAM, Miss Scott-Robinson's comments upon the cult of Teutonism in our language are very much to the point. Many of the more egregious compound-words, like *lifestyle* and *ongoing* have undoubtedly been propagated by the New York "media" establishment which is largely of German-Jewish extraction.

No doubt it is this which has prepared the way for the various coinages which are now tossed about by various types. I have heard a schoolmaster refer to a child's vocabulary as

his *wordstock*; and in a recent copy of the *Rad-to Times* a programme about astronomy was introduced with the question "Can you identify the main *stargroups*?" (emphasis mine). *Stargroups*? What justification can there be for this ugly coinage? I can only presume that the writer supposed that *constellation* was too difficult a word for his readers. It was by no means a children's programme, by the bye—it was being broadcast after midnight.

I suspect that this is the reason behind many Anglo-Saxonisms. After twenty years of "progressive" education a large portion of our countrymen can only be trusted to understand long words if they are built up of simple short ones, so that they can work out the meanings for themselves. Anything else might strain their impoverished *wordstocks*; or, worse still, perhaps even improve them.

YOUR OB<sup>d</sup>. SERV<sup>t</sup>., MISS P. WARDLE.

### The Passions

## Romantic Love

### by "Imperia"

IT needs hardly to be said that love is one of the things in which the Romantic believes. In a world in which romantic love seems often a thing of the past, or an infringement of the sacred separateness and independence of each equal unit of Society, the Romantic believes that an ideal of Beauty and of Truth may yet be found in another human creature; and may even be moved by those deep and turbulent longings which have moved the hearts of men in all ages before these shallow and clinical days.

This is not merely a difference of temperament. In sooth, it is not a difference of temperament at all. It is a difference of philosophy. The unromantic view of romance is inevitable and logically necessary to those who believe that man is but an animal; an economic unit; a free and equal atom, seeking out a maximum of material comfort in an ant-heap world; and that all the ideals and beauties of the past were but the lies of priest and king, designed to keep us from the truths and glories of Coca-Cola, free love and the factory system.

If, on the other hand, one believes that the ideal and the beautiful are the highest of realities; that the world is not dead and mechanistic; that beauty can manifest in a human soul, then one, especially when one is

young, is like to be subject to romantic longings: nor will one imagine they are but animal desires, to be satisfied by animal satisfactions or not at all. The modern world is a truncated world—a world with its upper half cut off. A world wherein all in the human spirit that is made to soar unto the heights is redirected to base economic or carnal ends. A world where the higher passions are repressed to a degree that the lower passions have never been repressed in the strictest of the old régimes.—For under the present régime, the very *existence* of the higher passions is denied, concealed and "explained away"; a form of obfuscation to which the lower passions are not vulnerable. What will be the result of this strange and historically unique repression, time alone can reveal; for the present we are concerned only with our own revolt against it, which may, in truth, be one of the first small cracks in the edifice of soulless modernism.

True love—as opposed to its animalised counterfeit—requires courtship. Literally, a paying court. True love knows that, in the beloved, it is in the presence of something high and noble, delicate and rare. Something which cannot be touched without form and ritual, and which, under the heavy-thumbed handling of everyday democratic chumminess would crumble away, or else would go for ever into hiding.

Relations between the sexes can be a problem for Romantics, for two reasons. The first reason is that, in the case of Romantic girls, there has, up to now, been a tendency to live in a girls'-own world and to regard men as somewhat clumsy and unmagical; incapable of entering the enchanted circle.

In the case of men, there has often been a similar distrust of women. Any one who is acquainted with our older families wherein some lingering perfume of tradition yet remains, will confirm, *sub rosa*, and naming no names, that while the menfolk are very often sound and solid and, but for some inevitable tarnish from the conditions of the modern world, not very much different from what they might have been a century ago, the women are rarely untouched by some species of *groosh*, in clothes, in countenance or in manner. It is as though the unmitigated and unopposed onslaught of "feminist" (a misnomer if ever one existed!) propaganda had left even the best-placed women of the land confused, disoriented, and thus a prey to the infiltration of the age.

The second problem in Romantic relations

between the sexes is more fundamental, and yet less of a problem—or if it is a problem, then it is an eternal problem and one fruitful of the highest poetic feelings—a problem, in short, which only the fool would wish to "solve". The Romantic is prone to seek in the other sex an ideal. An ideal which, pedestrian modern psychology would assure us, is unattainable in a "real person" and could only place an "intolerable strain" on a "relationship". Modern psychology, in this as in all else, is not only wrong, but is really quite remarkable in its inability to grasp even the most rudimentary truths about the human psyche.

The ideal is, at least potentially, immanent in all people, and the realisation of this perfection is the only thing which makes life worth living. The modern world, in its rejection of formality, of the mask, of etiquette and of distinctions between the sexes, the classes and all other human archetypes, degrades us to the level of the animal—or, more accurately, of the machine. The whole purpose of formal behaviour is that we *should* attempt to embody the ideal; and in courtship, marriage, and relations between the sexes in general, the ideals of the perfect lady and the *preux chevalier* lie behind the daily modes and manners of civil intercourse.

If the romance has gone out of modern life, it is because these things are no longer tingling just beneath the surface and expressing themselves in a hundred court-tesies, feints and teases. They still exist, of course, because they are an integral part of our human nature. They still require desperately to be satisfied; but because their very existence has been denied to the modern mind by a tendentious mixture of pseudo-science and vulgar ideology, that desperate requirement takes the form not of a deep and creative romantic yearning, but of a flat deadness beneath the surface of human life; an encroaching boredom and banality, and a dull itch which, unable to satisfy itself, either sinks into lethargy or seeks out (or rather allows itself to be pumped with) stimulants of the crudest kind—carnal behaviour, degenerate entertainments and filthy, anarchic "music"—in a hopeless attempt to find some form of sensation which can penetrate the inert, desensitised surface of human existence in the brave new, rationalised, demythologised world.

Romantic romance and Romantic courtship are, before all else, ways of remythologising the world—that is, of renewing our connexion

with the true forms and "myths" (i.e. profoundest truths) of human existence. These are methods of stripping off the desensitised carapace of Freudian pseudo-science and the egalitarian/utilitarian plebeianisation of Eros. There are ways back into the vibrant sources of life which we have been denied: the mysteries of love, of femininity, of sensitivity and fascination, of courtliness and charm.

In our next issue, we will be presenting a *Guide to Courtship*.

*Verse*

## The Eternal Vision

by Diotima

"It is necessary to refute the evolutionist prejudice which makes out that the Greeks 'attained' to a certain level or a certain result: that is to say that the triad Socrates—Plato—Aristotle represents the summit of an entirely 'natural' thought, a summit reached after long periods of effort and groping. The reverse is the truth in the sense that all the said triad did was to crystallise rather imperfectly a primordial and essentially timeless wisdom, actually of Aryan origin and typologically close to the Celtic, Germanic, Mazdaean and Brahmanic esotericisms."

FRITHIOF SCHUON

*I dreamed I saw the patterns of all things  
Arrayed on Heaven's night-encurtained stage:  
The patterns of all minstrels and all kings  
Of every mother and of every sage.*

And all at once I knew what I had known  
And every child has known since time began;  
Each king and every minstrel round his throne—  
When kings were kings—and every tribe of man.

*I knew that every thing beneath the sun,  
That resonates within the human heart,  
Is not one thing of many, but is One,  
And is the Form of which it plays the part.*

*An hundred kings sit on an hundred thrones  
And bear an hundred sceptres in their hands;  
And yet it is The King alone who owns  
The fealty of all the earth's fair lands.*

*Innumerable mothers kiss the curls  
On little golden heads beyond all count,  
And yet there is but Mother—boys and girls  
Cannot dilute the Essence in amount.*

*I have been told that on this mortal earth  
There is no warmth that comes not from the sun;  
That when we burn a log upon the hearth,  
We but undo what summer days have done:*

*They turned the golden beams to sturdy oak,  
And in my hearth the miracle's reversed—  
From out the logs, fire's alchemies invoke  
The warmth and light that made them at the first.*

Likewise, upon this earth there is no light  
But that which comes at first from that same sun.  
An hundred lamps and candles cheer the night  
And yet there is no Luminant but one.

And so it is of every mortal thing  
That resonates within the human heart:  
Of all the minstrel does not scorn to sing,  
Except he have forgot his noble part.

*The things that are, the things that will abide,  
The things that feed the heart and make it whole,  
Stand not apart in Luciferic pride,  
But rooted in what ancients called world-soul.*

*The noble man will never bend the knee  
To any man, whatever be his might,  
Except the King within the king he see:  
Then gladly will he be his humble knight.*

*The noble man, for all his chivalry,  
Will never bend the knee to any woman,  
But in her he perceive the Lady: She  
Compels obeisance, being more than human.*

*The man who can no longer see these things  
Has forfeited all claim to nobleness;  
Has left the realm of ladies and of kings;  
Reduced his state to that of beasts—or less—*

*For even beasts have their ordained rôle  
And emblems are of supramundane glory:  
Endowed with neither intellect nor soul,  
Do not forsake their part within the story.*

*Man has the privilege, if such it be,  
To break the thread and sever his own roots,  
To cut the ties of faith and history  
And proudly bear his own black, barren fruits:*

*Create a world expressive of no truth  
Beyond what can be told in bankers' books  
Or pamphlets touted by some fervid youth  
To whom Street-corners are as leafy nooks.*

*I dreamed I saw the patterns of all things  
Beyond the parted velvet of night's sky;  
The cavalcade of ladies, lords and kings,  
Arrayed in golden splendour, galloped by.*

*I dreamed I saw th' eternal Mother's kiss,  
The perfect Craftsman consummate his art,  
The perfect Spouses' æriternal bliss,  
The perfect Servant, perfect in her part.*

*I dreamed I saw the order of the world,  
To which, imperfectly, the world aspired:  
I dreamed the golden banner flew unfurled  
To which all rallied ere the world grew tired.*

*I dreamed I saw the pattern of all things,  
By which alone all things may be made new:  
Those Forms each child's eye sees, each  
  minstrel sings.  
I dreamed the world awoke and saw them too.*

## Review

## A Traditionalist's Anthology

by Elizabeth, Lady Freeman

THIS splendid volume is a good example of the value of keeping a commonplace book. It comprises a selection of passages from a wide variety of sources on an almost equally wide variety of themes culled from a commonplace book kept over several decades by *Lady Freeman*. As well as the names one might expect to find in such an anthology:—Burke, Chesterton, Dr. Johnson, Shakespeare, Tennyson—there are many names which might come as a surprise. Indeed, one of the minor fascinations of this book is the way it often reveals the ubiquity of the traditional sense up until very recently even among those most notable for their contributions to the “liberal” cause. In a world where history is read from the left-hand pages only, the evil that men say and do tends to live after them while the good is oft interred with the bones of civilisation.

How many people know, I wonder, that Lord Acton, most often quoted as saying:—"all power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely" also said:—"Democracy inevitably takes the tone of the lower portions of society and degrades the higher." Or that Dr. Albert Schweitzer, that secular saint in the pimply hagiology of race-mixing internationalism, wrote:—"The negro is a child, and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority. With regard to the negroes, I have coined the formula: 'I am your brother, it is true, but your elder brother.'" Or that Christabel Pankhurst said:—"The inherent weakness

of democracy is that it degenerates into either dictatorship or headless confusion."

Miss Pankhurst, in fact has a number of noteworthy quotations in this book. It was she who said:—"Churches were not commissioned by Christ to establish international peace, and it is presumptuous of them to suppose that it can be achieved before His return. Pacifist Christians disarm themselves, but fail to disarm the enemy." What an amusing heroine for the "wimmin" who are said to haunt our commons.

Other quotations from curious sources are less pleasing, but well worthy of consideration for the way in which they lay bare the underlying ideology of the modern world, usually disguised with more discreet liberal-pluralist euphemisms. Take this excerpt from a lecture by Dr. Brock Chisolm, just before he became Director General of the World Health Organisation:

"Let us accept our own responsibility to remodel the world... World Government may be established by developing world citizens with a State of emotional security which fits one to be a citizen of a democracy... This State of emotional maturing can be achieved by destroying traditional moral values.

"The reinterpretation and eventual eradication of the concept of right and wrong has been the basis of child training."

But this is not merely a political book. There are many passages of immense spiritual and cultural value. The sections on love, death, happiness and sorrow, for example, contain passages from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Yeats, Belloc, Socrates, Keats, Alice Meynell, La Rochefoucauld, Byron, Sir Thomas Browne and many other writers. In these sections it is rather like any bedside anthology, but with the added and indispensable advantage that one can browse through it in the confidence that one is not suddenly going to be offended by a piece of drivel from Ghandi, Martin Luther King or some unspeakable "pop" lyricist.

The book is nicely got up and printed on a real letterpress, a rarity these days; though we could wish that the publisher had spared the expense of the thermographic printing on the cover (a plain classic design which would have looked better printed in plain, classic ink) and applied the money to more reliable binding. The book is highly recommended as a fascinating and enlightening work, to which you will return to browse time and time again.

*A Traditionalist's Anthology* is published by  
Candour Publishing Co., Forest House, Liss  
Forest, Hampshire at £9-10s post free.

## Notes & Comments

### From Cockneys to "Feudalism in Crinolines"

MANY of you write long and discursive letters, not only to Miss Prism but to various of those who help to make the magazine. The discussions contained in these are often so interesting that we felt it would be a good idea to include snatches from them. Passages in italics are not necessarily by Miss Prism, but may be by the recipient of the letter.

Mr. Donald Philippi writes from California: "I must tell you how much I appreciated the review of *The Moonstone*—I have seldom seen such a lucid, wise, thoughtful review... [A friend] objected to the Romantic emphasis on accent. Of course he is in favour of proper speech, respectful address to elders etc. but he says one's accent depends largely upon where one was born and can be changed only with Herculean effort... On the accent question we in this country face a somewhat different problem than you do. Since this is a racially heterogeneous nation consisting of immigrants from all over the world... we sometimes find that our links with the mother country are becoming attenuated. For example, in some of our school systems we have children being educated in their parents' native languages instead of in English. Another example is the so-called "Great Books" controversy. Those of unsound views at Universities have recently begun to agitate for changes in the general Studies curriculum which would de-emphasise the classics of traditional Western learning simply for the reason that these classics were written predominantly by what they choose to call "dead white men"... They argue clamorously that black writers, women writers, Asian writers and the like (presumably chosen by the agitators themselves) ought to be substituted for Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Shakespeare and other classical Western authors in order to redress some sort of imbalance which they perceive in the curriculum."

On accents, I should say that our publications have never intended to lay down universal and absolute laws as to pronunciation; merely to describe the usage of the 'British Romantic';—and meaning that, in fact, in a rather narrow sense: only one class of 'Romantic'. Romantics, for example, do not attempt to change the accents of their servants; they consider it right and proper that their servants should have lower-class

accents (there are exceptions, though; a lady's maid or "gentleman's gentleman" might attempt to speak more like a lady or a gentleman). The fact that Romantics do not themselves speak in regional ('British') accents does not at all mean that we are hostile to such accents. On the contrary, we like to hear broad Yorkshire or Somerset on the lips of the appropriate person, and deplore any tendency toward adulterating true regional accents. The strong dislike of Cockneyism is not so much because it is a lower-class accent as because it is a debased, urban proletarian accent which is adulterating not only educated speech, but also many of the splendid dialects of Southern England. We have recently heard that even Scots children are becoming semi-Cockneyified by television. The Cockney accent—or rather, the thin, whining sub-Cockney accent propagated by British television, rather than the rich, fruity, old-fashioned Bow-bells Cockney—is not merely a neutral dialect. It does carry with it a number of implications of a particular sort of urban corruption and deliberate, shameless, slovenly vulgarity. There is probably no equivalent to this in America.

An answer to the "great books" argument might be to include non-Western great books—Confucius, Hindoo Scriptures, the writings of the Arabian scholastics, Japanese classics and so forth. In studying these, undergraduates would learn that traditional, hierarchical and spiritual ideas are common to all mankind and that democratic Western notions are a very small aberration both in time and in place. This would be true multi-culturalism, and in the mind of an intelligent man it would serve to strengthen his understanding of, and loyalty to, his own culture without fostering a blind arrogance toward other cultures. In some ways, the study of great writers who are exclusively Western and preponderantly post-"Enlightenment" can give students an undue and disproportionate sense of the importance of liberal, rationalistic and democratic thought, and foster the illusion that "all history" has been a linear progress toward such notions.

Obviously the study of modern non-Anglo-Saxon writers is in no way "multi-cultural", since all such writers (and especially those favoured by Pavlovian leftist agitators) are deeply conditioned by modern Western liberal-democratic or socialist notions and are therefore not authentic representatives of their own cultures.

Having said this, I must register my doubts as to whether a country can combine a traditional order with a heterogeneous cultural or racial make-up. In almost all Western countries, liberals favour the creation of multi-racial and multi-

cultural societies precisely because they know that they are the surest solvent of continuity and tradition. Which leads on to your question as to how the United States could, with its plural and democratic history, become more traditional. I feel very reticent about pronouncing on this, knowing so little. I would be very interested to hear what traditional-minded Americans think. One can of course argue that the American State is in its very inception anti-traditional, being founded on liberal and republican principles (largely derived, of course, from 'British Whiggery'). Some one recently suggested to me that the American Revolution was our greatest tragedy before the present century, splitting the 'English world' into two. Or again, how different things might have been had the separation come earlier and for nobler reasons, with the United States (or U.K.A., as it might have become) declaring for James III and the legitimate succession and breaking from the British Hanoverian régime of George I.

All this is mere fancy, of course, and the ball of America will have to be played from where she lies. I should say it will be a tricky shot.

Father Francis of the Motherhood of Our Lady writes: "Surely Sparrowhawk knows that Ten Little Niggers was longish ago amended to ... Indians. As to removing cigarettes in illustrations—when the wonderful Rupert Stories are reprinted, cigarettes do disappear, but Uncle Bruno's pipe is allowed to remain. Of course, Coon Island is renamed.

"I am worried by M. Lenoir's suggestions which, however he denies it, can only refer to a dictatorship; I have long prophesied a totalitarian State by the turn of the century."

Miss Langridge replies: "As you know, I do not agree with M. Lenoir's suggestion, but in fairness, I cannot see its connexion with dictatorship. Surely the more usual modern answers to crime—more policing, identity cards, random checks, etc. are the road to dictatorship. Dictatorship is a proletarian institution, as Coomaraswamy rightly pointed out. The roots of tyranny lie in democracy as Plato teaches and as this century has amply proved (Hitler was democratically elected and Bolshevism is founded on democratic principles). Universal characteristics of dictatorships are that they a) restrict the right to keep and bear arms to the functionaries of the State, and b) tend to eliminate all social distinctions not based upon State power. All power must flow from and return to the State. This is precisely what M. Lenoir is arguing against."

Dr. J. Schmidt sends from Texas a curious card with a request for our comments. The card is tastefully printed in copperplate script and announces the forthcoming birth

of a child to Mr. Richard Eugene G— and "Ms." Victoria Loraine E—. Dr. Schmidt says that it has come unexpectedly from people of very slight acquaintance.

Apart from the idiocy of using "Ms." on a quasi-formal announcement—which is the equivalent of wearing a Mickey Mouse watch with a dress suit—one wonders what can motivate people to announce in advance the birth of a bastard. Perhaps they feel that it will in some way "legitimise" the event. They are wrong. There is only one way to legitimise the poor child and we suggest that they do so forthwith.

Mr. Douglas Penwill writes from the Transvaal (on the question of Feudalism and Victorianism): "You must most certainly continue to be feudal. The pattern of your purpose—of which I so much approve—requires a considerable degree of self-control (in this degenerate age) and quite a strict discipline of others. Naturally I know that "Feudalism" implies a two-sided relationship—indeed, many-sided—but in the long run, always and everywhere, some one has to give the orders and make the decisions. And Feudalism in crinolines—or the male equivalent—is much more satisfactory than the old mediæval article. I think it was Churchill who wrote somewhere that from the time the Romans left until Queen Victoria arrived every one in Britain was, most of the time, cold, dirty and without any real privacy."

I am not sure I agree with Churchill about the time between the Romans and Queen Victoria. I have read somewhere that filth as an integral part of life, far from being a mediæval "custom" was a development of Tudor times. Certainly the rule of a mediæval nunnery enjoins frequent bathing which, if it was really not the custom among any one else, would surely have been looked on as an excessive and worldly luxury. Privacy is another matter. Certainly the Middle Ages had little of it, but then one cannot judge the comfort or pleasure of another time by one's own standards. Traditional Indians, I am told, consider the use of—well, of one of our commonest every-day sanitary arrangements—utterly repulsive and squalid, but it does not bother us.—And mediæval man might have found our normal standards of privacy uncomfortably stiff, cold and stand-offish. A curious thought, when the modern world likes to consider itself so "open" and "relaxed" in comparison with the past. It is all a matter of what one is used to.

This is not (of course!) to say that there are

**SAY RHODESIA, NOT "ZIMBABWE"  
INSIST ON IMPERIAL**

no standards; and our standards, for better or worse, are Victorian standards.—And I do not mean "our" only in the sense of "we Romantics", but meaning every one in the modern world. Insofar as there are still standards, they are Victorian ones. There has been no civilisation since with sufficient confidence or reality to create new standards; so our starting point, like it or not (and I do not dislike it, but it would make no difference if I did) are the norms inherited, modified and established during Queen Victoria's reign.

Part of what we were trying to do in the Moonstone review was to demonstrate the continuity of the Victorian mentality with tradition (even in a "liberal" Victorian like Wilkie Collins). The liberal reading of literature, like the Whig interpretation of history, has cut us off from our proper roots.

In sum: while I feel duty bound to defend the Middle Ages against the campaign of calumny which has been waged against them since the "Renaissance", I fully agree that Feudalism in crinolines—or their 21st-century equivalent—is the only form of Feudalism possible to us, and, for us, by far the pleasantest form, too.

#### Receipt

### Richmond Maids of Honour

IT was in the days of his youth and innocence, in the mid-1520s, that King Henry VIII, strolling through the grounds of Hampton Court, came upon a group of maids of honour, one of whom was Miss Anne Boleyn, later to become his second wife. The maids were eating cakes and offered one to the King, who declared it the most delicious of confections and enquired after its name. The charming attendants replied that, as it had been but lately devised by their royal mistress's pastry-cook, it had as yet no name; whereupon the young King decreed that henceforth the cakes should be known as Maids of Honour.

For more than 200 years the receipt for this royal delicacy was a closely-guarded secret; but during the reign of George II a man of the merchant classes by the name of Burdekin contrived to wheedle the secret from one of the ladies of the Court. Burdekin lost no time in setting up a shop in Richmond-on-Thames, and for generations his family prospered by making and selling the cakes.

Today, The English Magazine has the honour of passing on the secret to you.

#### RECEIPT FOR 16 MAIDS OF HONOUR

8 oz. puff pastry	3 oz. sugar
8 oz. curd or cottage cheese	2 oz. currants
Grated rind of 1 lemon	1 egg, beaten
2 teaspoons brandy	½ oz. melted butter
½ oz. chopped blanched almonds	

Rub the cheese through a fine sieve. Add the egg, sugar, currants, chopped almonds, lemon rind, butter and brandy and mix thoroughly. Roll out the pastry and cut into rounds to line 16 greased patty tins. Half-fill the shells with the mixture and bake in an oven pre-heated to 375 degrees Fahrenheit (gas mark 5) for 20-30 minutes until golden brown.

#### Parlour and Party Entertainment

### An Easy Rhyme-Game

THE games one plays in the evenings at home, or when guests are staying with one, may sometimes be merely amusing, but it is good if they can exercise the mind and improve one's knowledge, inventiveness or mental discipline.

Prominent among the more improving sort of game are those which require the composition of verses. Some "verse-capping" games are really quite advanced, but here is one which we have found ideally suited to beginners. Each player takes paper and pencil (always a relief to the novice verse-maker) and writes two words which rhyme—e.g. *sedate* and *fate*—the papers are then passed to the left and each player writes another two rhyming words. The papers are passed to the left again and each player now has a paper with two sets of two rhyming words. Her task is to make a four-line verse using all four words as endings. They need not be in the order given and she may use couplets or alternate rhymes. For example, in a recent game, a player had *gate, hate, love* and *dove*, and her poem was as follows:

*I saw a little, gentle turtle-dove  
Which sang to me this message from my love:  
"Tonight, when we meet by the garden gate,  
Wear not that old brown hat which I so hate."*

Since the game is somewhat slight as such games go, verses most often tend to fall into this humorous vein, though something of real charm may occasionally be produced. When only two players are available, each supplies all four endings to the other, and this, too, can be a very delightful pastime.